

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1. (original) A black ink composition comprising (1) water, (2) carbon black, and (3) a fine particle emulsion,

wherein (A) the content of said carbon black is less than 0.4 wt%, and

wherein (B) the solid content of said fine particle emulsion is 20 times or more the content of said carbon black.

Claim 2. (currently amended) The black ink composition according to claim 1, wherein the content of said carbon black is 0.01 wt% to less than 0.4 wt% ~~or more~~.

Claim 3. (currently amended) The black ink composition according to claim 1, wherein said fine particle emulsion comprises ~~at least one of~~ a polyalkylene emulsion, and an emulsion containing a pH-adjusted resin as a resin component or both,

wherein said pH-adjusted resin is obtained by a process comprising the steps of:

polymerizing an ethylenically unsaturated carboxylic acid monomer and another monomer copolymerizable with said ethylenically unsaturated carboxylic acid monomer in the presence of an alcoholic hydroxyl group-containing water-soluble polymer compound or a copolymerizable surfactant to give a copolymer having an acid value of 40 or less; and

adjusting the pH of said copolymer with an inorganic base.

Claim 4. (original) The black ink composition according to claim 3, wherein said inorganic base used for preparing said pH-adjusted resin is an alkali metal hydroxide or an alkaline earth metal hydroxide.

Claim 5. (previously presented) The black ink composition according to claim 3, wherein said alcoholic hydroxyl group-containing water-soluble polymer compound used for preparing said pH-adjusted resin is a vinyl alcohol polymer.

Claim 6. (previously presented) The black ink composition according to claim 3, wherein said ethylenically unsaturated carboxylic acid monomer used for preparing said pH-adjusted resin is an acrylic acid or a methacrylic acid.

Claim 7. (previously presented) The black ink composition according to claim 3, wherein said monomer copolymerizable with said ethylenically unsaturated carboxylic acid monomer used for preparing said pH-adjusted resin is an ethylenically unsaturated carboxylate monomer.

Claim 8. (previously presented) The black ink composition according claim 3, wherein the pH of said emulsion containing the pH-adjusted resin as a resin component is from 8 to 11.

Claim 9. (previously presented) The black ink composition according to claim 3, wherein said polyalkylene emulsion is a polyethylene emulsion or a polypropylene emulsion.

Claim 10. (previously presented) The black ink composition according to claim 3, wherein the total content of the solids content of said pH-adjusted resin and said polyalkylene emulsion is from 0.5 wt% to 20 wt% on the basis of the total weight of the black ink composition.

Claim 11. (previously presented) The black ink composition according to claim 1, further comprising a complementary colorant.

Claim 12. (previously presented) The black ink composition according to claim 1, which is an ink composition for ink jet recording.

Claim 13. (previously presented) An ink set comprising a black ink composition according to claim 1 and a black ink composition having a higher carbon black concentration and being darker than said black ink composition.

Claim 14. (previously presented) The ink set according to claim 13, comprising:

a black ink composition comprising (1) water, (2) carbon black, and (3) a fine particle emulsion,

wherein (A) the content of said carbon black is less than 0.4 wt%, and

wherein (B) the solid content of said fine particle emulsion is 20 times or more the content of said carbon black;

a black ink composition for medium gradation containing carbon black in an amount of from 0.4 wt% to 1.5 wt% on the basis of the total weight of the black ink

composition for medium gradation; and

a darker black ink composition containing carbon black in an amount of from 1.5 wt% to 10 wt% on the basis of the total weight of the darker black ink composition.

Claim 15. (currently amended) The ink set according to claim 14, wherein the black ink composition for medium gradation comprises ~~at least one of~~:

a black ink composition containing carbon black in an amount of from 0.4 to 1 wt%; ~~and~~

a black ink composition containing carbon black in an amount of from 1 to 1.5 wt%, or both.

Claim 16. (previously presented) The ink set according to claim 14, wherein the black ink composition for medium gradation contains a fine particle emulsion, and the solid content of said fine particle emulsion is 2 times or more the content of the carbon black contained therein.

Claim 17. (currently amended) The ink set according to claim 16, wherein said fine particle emulsion of said black ink composition for medium gradation comprises ~~at least one of~~ a polyalkylene emulsion, ~~and~~ an emulsion containing a pH-adjusted resin as a resin component or both,

wherein said pH-adjusted resin is obtained by a process comprising the steps of:

polymerizing an ethylenically unsaturated carboxylic acid monomer and another

monomer copolymerizable with said ethylenically unsaturated carboxylic acid monomer in the presence of an alcoholic hydroxyl group-containing water-soluble polymer compound or a copolymerizable surfactant to give a copolymer having an acid value of 40 or less; and adjusting the pH of said copolymer with an inorganic base.

Claim 18. (previously presented) A recording method of performing recording by ejecting a droplet of an ink composition to attach the droplet on a recording medium by using an ink set according to claim 13.

Claim 19. (original) A recorded matter which is recorded by a recording method according to claim 18.